

A Review on Digital Marketing Strategies for Promoting Green Fashion among Youth

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Abstract

This paper employs a narrative literature review to examine digital marketing strategies for promoting green fashion among youth. As environmental awareness continues to grow, the fashion industry faces increasing pressure to adopt sustainable practices that resonate with younger consumers. This study identifies relevant literature through comprehensive searches of databases such as ScienceDirect, Scopus, ResearchGate, and ProQuest, focusing on the intersection of digital marketing and sustainable fashion. The findings reveal that digital marketing plays a vital role in engaging young consumers with eco-friendly fashion choices. Innovative strategies, including social media engagement, influencer collaborations, and interactive campaigns, are highlighted as effective means of promoting sustainable fashion. These strategies enhance brand visibility and encourage youth participation in environmentally responsible consumption. As this demographic increasingly shows a preference for sustainable products, fashion brands must align their marketing efforts with these values to foster consumer loyalty and promote long-term sustainable behavior. This research underscores the potential of digital marketing as a transformative tool for advancing the green fashion movement and contributing to a more sustainable future in the fashion industry.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Green Fashion, Youth Engagement, Sustainability, Social Media

Introduction

The global fashion industry, one of the largest contributors to environmental degradation, has faced mounting pressure to adopt sustainable practices. From excessive water usage to textile waste and greenhouse gas emissions, the environmental impact of traditional fashion production has prompted calls for transformation (Centobelli et al., 2022). Youth, as a significant demographic group, are emerging as influential agents of change, demonstrating heightened environmental consciousness and a growing preference for sustainable products

(Thomaes et al., 2023). This shift has catalyzed a new wave of green fashion that merges ecological responsibility with contemporary aesthetics. However, the challenge lies in effectively reaching and engaging this audience - where digital marketing has proven to be a critical tool (Vassalo et al., 2024).

Digital marketing, which leverages online platforms, technologies, and strategies to promote products and services, offers unique opportunities to drive awareness and adoption of green fashion (Rosário, Lopes & Rosario, 2023). As youth increasingly dominate digital spaces, including social media, e-commerce platforms, and mobile applications, brands must strategically use these channels to communicate their sustainability commitments. The proliferation of social media influencers, interactive content, and personalized campaigns has transformed how brands connect with consumers (Antczak, 2024). In the context of green fashion, these tools are pivotal in educating young consumers about eco-friendly choices and fostering long-term engagement (Rana, 2024).

Several studies highlight the role of digital marketing in promoting sustainability, particularly in youth engagement. For instance, Vilkaitė-Vaitonė (2024) emphasized that social media campaigns featuring authentic, relatable influencers resonate strongly with younger audiences. Likewise, interactive and gamified marketing strategies have been shown to enhance engagement and foster positive brand associations (Xi & Hamari, 2020). These approaches increase brand visibility and create a deeper emotional connection with consumers, encouraging them to align their purchases with personal values. Despite this, the emotional dimension of digital marketing in the context of sustainable fashion remains underexplored in the literature (Busalim, Fox & Lynn, 2022; El-Dosuky, 2024; Ray & Nayak, 2023). By focusing on how digital marketing strategies influence emotional connections with eco-conscious youth, this study aims to address this research gap and provide insights into how brands can cultivate lasting relationships with their target audience (Azhar, 2024).

Furthermore, the increasing availability of data analytics allows brands to better understand the preferences and behaviors of their target audience. For green fashion, this capability enables the creation of tailored marketing campaigns to emphasize transparency in supply chains, eco-certifications, and the environmental benefits of products (Ray & Nayak, 2023). For example, a study on youth purchasing behavior in Malaysia found that transparency and ethical practices significantly influence their purchasing decisions (Shien, Huei & Yan, 2023).

This paper employs a narrative literature review to explore the intersection of digital marketing strategies and green fashion, with a particularly focus on youth. It aims to consolidate existing knowledge while identifying innovative approaches to advancing sustainable fashion. By examining current practices, challenges, and opportunities, this study seeks to provide valuable insights for fashion brands striving to align their marketing strategies with the values of environmentally conscious youth. Ultimately, this research underscores the transformative potential of digital marketing in shaping a more sustainable fashion industry.

Literature Review

The global fashion industry has faced increasing scrutiny due to its significant contribution to environmental degradation, including excessive water consumption, waste generation, and

greenhouse gas emissions (Centobelli et al., 2022). As awareness of these environmental impacts grows, a shift toward sustainable practices has become imperative. The youth demographic, characterized by a heightened sense of environmental responsibility and a preference for sustainable products, plays a crucial role in this transformative movement (Thomaes et al., 2023). Digital marketing, leveraging the reach and engagement of online platforms, presents a powerful tool for fashion brands to connect with this eco-conscious audience and promote green fashion effectively (Vassalo et al., 2024).

Understanding Green Fashion

Green fashion, or sustainable fashion, refers to the design, production, and consumption of clothing in an eco-friendly and resource-efficient manner. This movement seeks to minimize the negative impact of the fashion industry on the planet by using sustainable materials, reducing waste, and implementing ethical labor practices. Unlike fast fashion, which prioritizes low costs and rapid production, green fashion emphasizes durability, recyclability, and environmentally conscious processes (Thomaes et al., 2023). Brands in this sector often incorporate organic or recycled materials, ensure fair labor conditions, and adopt methods that reduce carbon emissions (Centobelli et al., 2022). The concept also extends to circular fashion, which focuses on reusing and recycling clothing to prolong product lifecycles and reduce waste (Vassalo et al., 2024).

Green fashion holds strong appeal among youth, who are increasingly aware of climate change and environmental challenges. This demographic values transparency, ethical practices, and sustainability, often preferring brands that align with these principles (Ray & Nayak, 2023). For many young consumers, fashion serves not only as a form of self-expression but also a statement of their commitment to environmental stewardship.

The Youth Demographic

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations (2010), defines “youth” as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24. This dynamic and influential consumer group - comprising both Generation Z and Millennials - has grown up in a world shaped by rapid technological change and broad access to digital information. They are digitally savvy, using social media and online platforms not just for social interaction but also for discovering new trends, products, and social causes (Turner, 2015; Li, 2025).

What distinguishes youth is their strong sense of social and environmental responsibility. Studies show that this demographic is more likely to engage in sustainable behaviors and support brands that demonstrate genuine commitment to ethical and ecological issues (Ray & Nayak, 2023). They also value authenticity and transparency, favoring brands that clearly communicate their sustainability initiatives (Shien, Huei & Yan, 2023).

In addition, youth are often trendsetters who influence broader consumer behaviors. Their purchasing decisions are heavily shaped by peer influence, with many placing greater trust in recommendations from influencers and friends than in traditional advertising (Antczak, 2024). The rise of social media influencers and content-sharing platforms have amplified young people’s power to shape public opinion and drive market trends, including the shift toward green fashion.

Digital Marketing's Role in Promoting Green Fashion

Digital marketing encompasses a variety of strategies and technologies aimed at reaching consumers through online platforms, social media, and mobile applications (Rosário, Lopes & Rosario, 2023). These channels are essential for fashion brands seeking to communicate their sustainability values and resonate with young audiences. Social media, in particular, offers visually rich, interactive environments ideal for promoting green fashion. Influencer marketing, which leverages individuals who share relatable and authentic messages, has proven especially effective in driving awareness and fostering trust (Vilkaitė-Vaitonė, 2024).

Interactive content and gamification are also powerful digital tools shown to enhance consumer engagement (Xi & Hamari, 2020). These strategies provide immersive experiences that educate consumers about sustainable practices while building stronger brand loyalty. For instance, marketing campaigns that include quizzes, challenges, or augmented reality features can boost participation and reinforce eco-friendly purchasing behaviors.

Transparency and Data Analytics

The increasing availability of data analytics has further empowered digital marketing. Brands can now collect and analyze consumer data to gain deeper insights into the behaviors, interests, and values of their target audiences. This enables the development of customized marketing strategies that highlight transparency in supply chains, eco-certifications, and environmental impact of products (Ray & Nayak, 2023). Transparency is especially compelling for young consumers, who prioritize ethical considerations when making purchasing decisions. Research on youth consumer behavior in Malaysia, for example, indicates that transparent and ethical practices significantly influence buying choices (Shien, Huei & Yan, 2023).

Methodology

This study adopts a narrative literature review approach to explore digital marketing strategies for promoting green fashion among youth. A narrative literature review was selected due to the interdisciplinary nature of the topic, encompassing sustainability, marketing, and youth behavior. Unlike systematic reviews, narrative reviews are more flexible and suitable for synthesizing diverse findings across fields while identifying emerging trends and conceptual linkages.

To ensure academic rigor and relevance, a structured search process was employed, incorporating some elements of systematic review techniques. Relevant literature was retrieved from major academic databases including ScienceDirect, Scopus, ResearchGate, and ProQuest. The following keywords and Boolean operators were used in various combinations: "digital marketing strategies" AND "green fashion" OR "sustainable fashion" AND "youth" OR "Gen Z" OR "young consumers."

The selection process adhered to predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 1), focusing on peer-reviewed journal articles and academic publications published between 2015 and 2024, to ensure that the findings reflect contemporary digital marketing practices and trends. Studies were included if they addressed digital marketing in the context of sustainable fashion and provided insights into youth consumer behavior. Articles unrelated

to the research objectives, non-academic sources, and those not written in English or Malay were excluded.

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Year	Articles published between 2015 and 2024.	Articles published before 2015.
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles or academic publications.	Textbooks, blogs, or other non-academic sources.
Language	Articles written in English or the Malay language.	Articles written in languages other than English and Malay.
Focus Area	Studies addressing digital marketing strategies in sustainable fashion.	Studies concentrate on conventional marketing or non-sustainable fashion.
Relevance	Articles examining the behavior of youth in relation to green fashion. Articles examining digital marketing processes and their applications in green fashion contexts.	Articles not addressing the intersection of digital marketing, green fashion, and youth. Articles unrelated to the research objectives, duplicate studies, or studies with inaccessible full texts.

Following screening, the final selection of articles was organized into three thematic categories to guide the review and discussion: (1) green fashion and youth consumer behavior, (2) digital marketing strategies for promoting green fashion, and (3) challenges in green fashion digital marketing. This thematic synthesis provides a structured yet flexible framework to capture current knowledge and uncover gaps and opportunities in the application of digital marketing strategies to foster youth engagement with green fashion.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this narrative literature review highlight the growing significance of digital marketing strategies in promoting green fashion among youth. As environmental awareness increases, digital platforms have emerged as critical tools for connecting fashion brands with younger consumers who prioritize sustainability. This section expands on the review's findings and discusses their implications for both the fashion industry and digital marketing efforts targeting the environmentally-conscious youth.

Green Fashion and Youth Consumer Behavior

Research consistently indicates that younger consumers are at the forefront of the sustainability movement, making deliberate consumption choices and actively seeking products that align with their environmental values (Maduku, 2024). As the largest consumer demographic in the global fashion market, Millennials and Generation Z are increasingly aware of the negative environmental impact of fast fashion and are proactively seeking more sustainable alternatives (Olivar Aponte et al., 2024).

Environmental concerns, such as reducing carbon footprints, supporting ethical labor practices, and minimizing waste, are central motivators in their purchasing decisions. A study by Lin, Wang & Yang (2023) reported that 50% of Millennials and 54% of Generation Z

consumers are willing to pay a 10% premium for sustainable products. Importantly, these consumers are not just merely passive purchasers; they actively engage with sustainability initiatives and advocate for change within the fashion industry (Zhang et al., 2024). They tend to support brands that openly communicate their environmental commitments and demonstrate genuine efforts toward sustainable practices.

Digital platforms play an integral role in shaping these behaviors. Social media, in particular, has become a key avenue through which youth discover sustainable fashion trends and interact with brands (Vladimirova et al., 2024). Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are especially effective in fostering brand awareness and building lasting relationships with consumers. Brands that leverage these platforms creatively and authentically are better positioned to communicate sustainability messages and foster communities around eco-conscious fashion (Silveira et al., 2024).

However, while youth consumers increasingly prefer sustainable options, they are also highly critical of brands that make unsubstantiated sustainability claims. This issue, commonly referred to as greenwashing, presents a significant barrier to engagement. In an industry where environmental claims can easily be exaggerated, young consumers are quick to scrutinize marketing messages and demand transparency (Lu et al., 2022). As a result, trust plays a crucial role in the success of green marketing strategies.

To counter greenwashing, brands must ensure that their sustainability claims are genuine, transparent, and verifiable. Effective digital marketing should integrate clear evidence of eco-friendly practices, such as third-party certifications, transparent supply chain data, and measurable sustainability outcomes (Arantes, 2023). These efforts must be communicated consistently across digital channels to build credibility and foster trust among the youth demographic.

Digital Marketing Strategies for Promoting Green Fashion

In the digital age, fashion brands have access to a wide array of tools to promote sustainable fashion among youth consumers. The most effective strategies center on creating authentic, transparent, and engaging content that resonates with the values of younger generations. By leveraging platforms frequented by youth, such as social media, blogs, and email, brands can effectively communicate their sustainability initiatives and inspire eco-conscious behavior (Miguel & Miranda, 2023). Among these strategies, influencer marketing, social media engagement, content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and personalized communication have proven particularly impactful in promoting green fashion.

Influencer marketing has become an indispensable strategy for engaging youth consumers in the fashion industry. As noted by Nissa et al. (2024), young people are more likely to trust social media influencers who share their sustainability values than traditional advertising. Influencers with a strong presence in eco-conscious communities play a vital role in raising awareness about sustainable fashion. By sharing personal experiences, reviewing eco-friendly brands, and advocating for sustainable living, these influencers build authentic connections with their audiences. Leading brands such as Patagonia and Reformation have effectively collaborated with influencers to enhance visibility and showcase their commitment to sustainability. This approach not only builds credibility but also fosters a community of

consumers who prioritize environmental and ethical considerations in their fashion choices (Jacobson & Harrison, 2022).

Social media engagement and user-generated content (UGC) are also pivotal in promoting green fashion (Hasbullah, Sulaiman & Mas'od, 2020). Platforms like Instagram and TikTok serve as dynamic spaces where brands can share visually appealing and informative content related to sustainability. UGC is especially impactful, as it allows consumers to actively participate in a brand's storytelling process (Varadainy et al., 2024). Youth consumers, who are highly active on social media, often share their sustainable fashion choices, such as thrifted outfits or eco-friendly purchases, thereby amplifying brand messages organically (Singh, 2024). This participatory engagement reinforces the brand's identity and nurtures a sense of community among individuals who support green fashion initiatives (Choudhary et al., 2022).

Content marketing and storytelling are critical for building emotional connections with audience by highlighting a brand's sustainability efforts (Shahrin, Ab Wahid & Mohamed Isa, 2022). Brands that communicate transparently about their use of eco-friendly materials, ethical production practices, and fair labor policies can educate consumers while positioning themselves as sustainability leaders (Arantes, 2023). For example, Patagonia has successfully integrated storytelling into its marketing by appealing to emotions, shared values, and authenticity, thereby inspiring positive change and fostering strong consumer loyalty (Behzadi & Bakhtiary, 2023).

Search engine optimization (SEO) and digital advertising are essential for ensuring visibility in the competitive sustainable fashion market. By optimizing website content for keywords such as "sustainable fashion" and "eco-friendly clothing", brands can improve their search engine rankings and attract eco-conscious consumers (Medina, Pereira Correia & Amores, 2019). Moreover, paid digital advertising on platforms like Instagram or Facebook allows brands to target specific segments with customized messages. Campaigns that emphasize environmental benefits or feature stylish, eco-friendly products can effectively drive traffic to websites and increase conversions among youth consumers (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Email marketing also remains a valuable strategy for keeping consumers informed about new product launches, promotions, and sustainability initiatives (Thomas, Chen & Iacobucci, 2022). Personalized email campaigns that utilize consumer data, such as past purchases and browsing behavior, are particularly effective in fostering brand loyalty (Jaiswal & Ranka, 2024). Youth consumers, who expect tailored and meaningful experiences from brands, are more likely to engage with emails that highlight eco-friendly products aligned with their values. These targeted communications improve customer satisfaction and reinforce the brand's commitment to sustainability, helping to build long-term relationships with environmentally conscious consumers (Yu & Zhu, 2024).

By combining these strategies, fashion brands can develop a comprehensive digital marketing approach that effectively promotes green fashion to youth audiences. Authenticity, transparency, and meaningful engagement remain key to building trust and inspiring young consumers to support sustainable fashion initiatives.

Challenges in Promoting Green Fashion Digitally

Despite the growing effectiveness of digital marketing in promoting green fashion, several challenges persist, particularly when targeting youth consumers. These challenges include concerns over authenticity, disparities in technology access, and varying levels of digital literacy. Addressing these barriers is essential for brands aiming to build trust and credibility among environmentally conscious young audiences.

One of the most pressing challenges is greenwashing, where brands make exaggerated or misleading claims about their sustainability efforts to appeal to eco-conscious consumers (Adamkiewicz et al., 2022). This practice erodes trust and often provokes skepticism, especially among youth who are increasingly well-informed and critical of brand transparency. Young consumers expect verifiable proof of sustainability claims, such as certifications from credible organizations, traceable supply chains, or detailed disclosures of production practices (Isac et al., 2024). In the absence of such evidence, brands risk damaging their credibility and alienating their target audience. To counter greenwashing, brands must adopt transparent and honest communication strategies, showcase genuine sustainability initiatives, and ensure that their marketing aligns with actual operational practices (Dimitrieska, Stankovska & Efremova, 2017).

Another key barrier is the digital divide, encompassing disparities in both technology access and digital literacy (Bhandari et al., 2022). While digital marketing largely depends on online platforms such as social media, e-commerce websites, and mobile apps, unequal access to internet connectivity remains a significant limitation in many regions. Youth in areas with limited connectivity or unstable digital infrastructure may face difficulties in accessing these platforms, thereby limiting the reach and effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Furthermore, even where access exists, varying levels of digital literacy can influence how well young consumers engage with and interpret sustainability messages.

To address these inequalities, brands should consider developing inclusive marketing strategies that account for technological limitations and prioritize accessibility (Dwivedi et al., 2021). This may involve using both online and offline communication channels, simplifying digital content to make it more comprehensible, or tailoring messages to reflect local contexts and values. Campaigns that integrate community-based outreach or educational components can also help bridge the gap between digital tools and environmental awareness.

By acknowledging and addressing these challenges, fashion brands can strengthen their digital marketing strategies and foster deeper engagement with youth consumers. Prioritizing authenticity, transparency, and inclusivity will be essential for overcoming these barriers and effectively promoting green fashion to a global and diverse audience.

Conclusion

The rising demand for sustainable fashion among youth has significantly transformed the fashion industry, with digital marketing emerging as a key tool to engage this environmentally conscious demographic. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube enable brands to connect directly with Millennials and Generation Z, using strategies like influencer marketing, social media engagement, content marketing, and SEO. These approaches are most effective

when brands communicate their sustainability initiatives with authenticity and transparency, fostering trust and emotional connections with consumers.

Young consumers value ethical production practices, the use of sustainable materials, and transparency in brand operations. By crafting compelling narratives and encouraging user-generated content, fashion brands can cultivate communities of like-minded advocates who organically amplify sustainability messages. However, challenges remain, including the prevalence of greenwashing, disparities in digital accessibility, and cultural variations in consumer values. To overcome these barriers, brands must substantiate their sustainability claims with credible data and develop inclusive marketing campaigns that resonate across diverse audiences.

The transition toward sustainable fashion represents more than a marketing trend; it signifies a broader shift in which branding intersects with environmental activism. For brands to succeed in this evolving landscape, authenticity, innovation, and a genuine commitment to sustainability must be embedded in their marketing strategies. By leveraging emerging digital tools to personalize engagement and communicate transparently, brands can build lasting trust and loyalty among youth consumers, ultimately contributing to the advancement of a more sustainable fashion industry.

This study contributes to both theoretical discourse and contextual understanding in the fields of digital marketing and sustainable consumption. It advances knowledge by bridging marketing strategy, youth behavior, and green fashion, which are often treated separately in existing research. In particular, it draws attention to the emotional and relational aspects of digital engagement, such as influencer authenticity and user-generated content, which are often overlooked in sustainable fashion studies. Contextually, the research highlights how digital marketing must align with the values and digital habits of youth, especially in emerging markets like Malaysia, where cultural and technological factors shape engagement. By positioning youth as key agents of sustainability transitions, the study underscores the role of digital platforms not only as marketing tools and but also as spaces for advocacy, education, and community-building.

While this study provides valuable insights into the current landscape, future research could focus on evaluating the effectiveness of specific digital marketing strategies in driving sustainable fashion purchases across diverse cultural and demographic groups. Further studies might also explore the long-term impact of influencer marketing on consumer behavior, as well as the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, in enhancing transparency and addressing greenwashing. Additionally, examining the potential for collaborative efforts between fashion brands and environmental organizations to promote sustainable fashion could yield significant insights. Lastly, investigating the influence of government policies and regulations on digital marketing strategies within the green fashion sector may provide a broader understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by brands.

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